

# The President's Daily Brief

*April 1, 1975*

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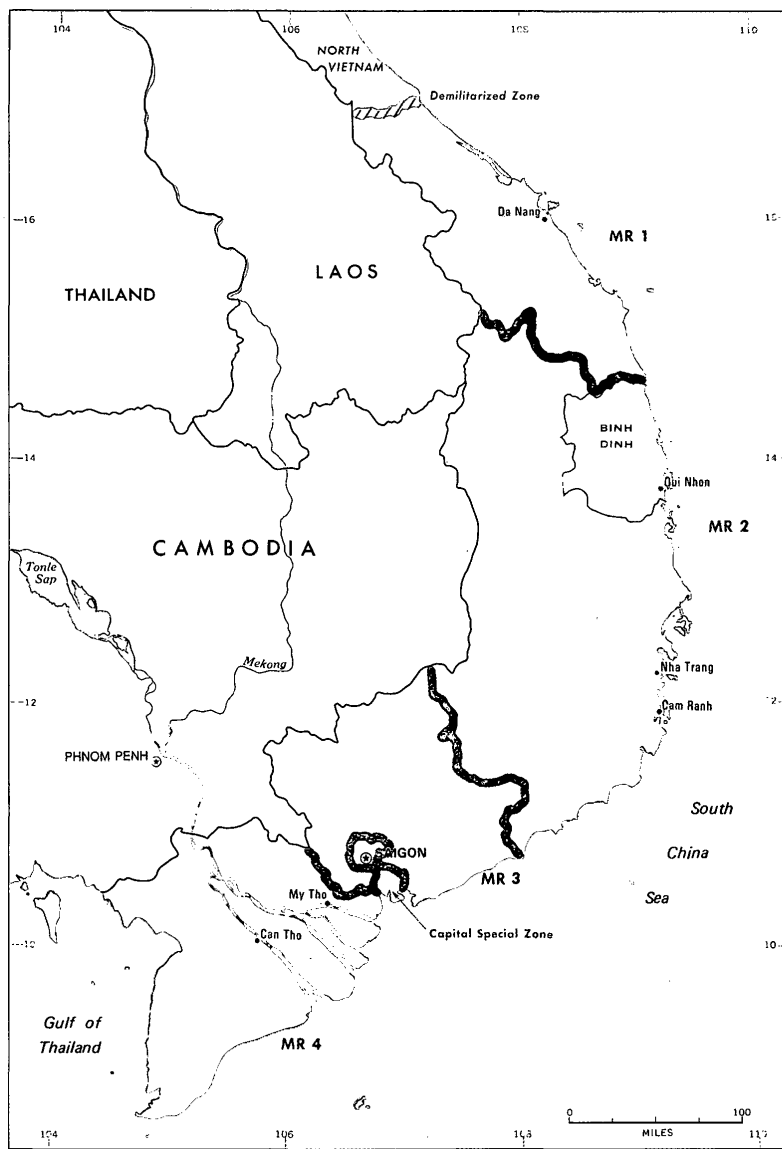
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VIETNAM

*The communists are pressing their drive southward along South Vietnam's central coast. Qui Nhon was abandoned by government forces last night. The South Vietnamese 22nd Division, which had been defending the city, was all but shattered in heavy fighting. The government's territorial forces in the Qui Nhon area appear to have heeded communist calls for an uprising and joined in attacks on the 22nd Division.*

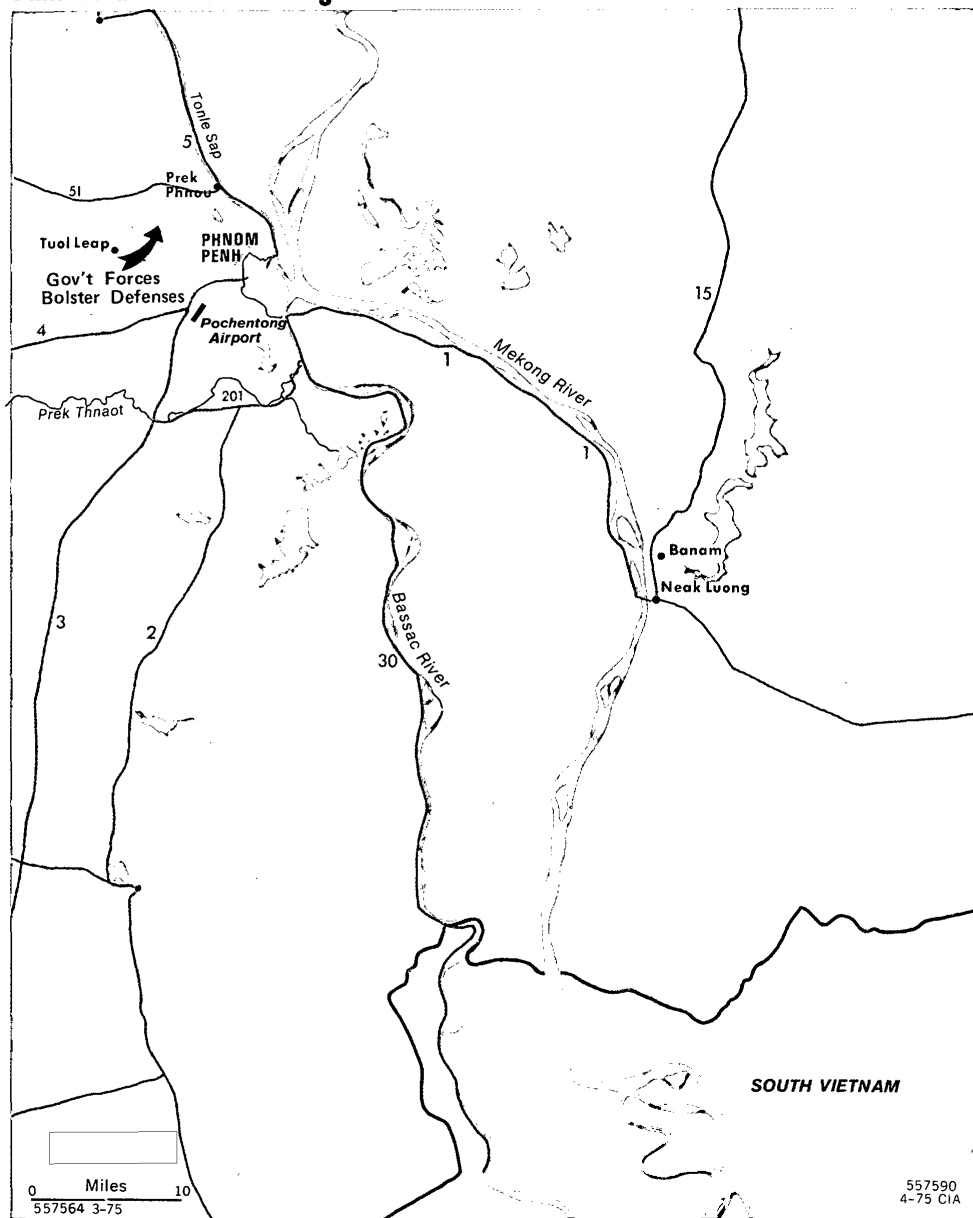
Near Nha Trang, an airborne brigade has taken heavy losses and been forced to pull back. About 9,000 members of the marine division are now at Cam Ranh, but it is doubtful they can be reorganized in time to come to the rescue of Nha Trang. Some troops have deserted from Cam Ranh, taking their weapons with them to Nha Trang, where they are adding to the panic and confusion, much as armed stragglers did in Da Nang.

Government forces in Military Region 2 have lost all 12 of their 175-mm. guns, all 54 of their M-48 tanks, and well over half of their 54 155-mm. guns. Although some attempts were made to destroy ammunition and fuel, large quantities are now in communist hands.

Regional commanders in the delta are expecting strong communist attacks against Can Tho and My Tho cities at any time. These commanders have been trying to prod their regular units to break up communist formations moving into place for the anticipated attacks, but without much success. Even if major attacks against the cities are slow to develop, the communists appear to have the major South Vietnamese units on the defensive and are likely to continue to make territorial gains.

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## Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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## CAMBODIA

*Cambodian army units have plugged the gap in the defense line north of Phnom Penh's Pochentong Airport. This action reduces the threat of a communist ground penetration toward the airfield, but was achieved only by the diversion of some units from the operation to retake Tuol Leap and to eliminate insurgent artillery and rocket sites in the area.*

The airlift continued at a near record pace, even though nearly 40 rockets struck around Pochentong. Several rockets also fell near the US embassy in the southeastern section of Phnom Penh; damage, however, was slight. The Japanese and Thai embassies in Phnom Penh plan to close later this week, and the South Vietnamese embassy has requested space for its personnel aboard US airlift flights returning to Saigon.

\* \* \*

President Lon Nol departed from Phnom Penh today. Prince Sihanouk told newsmen in Peking yesterday that Lon Nol's departure would not alter his or the Khmer communists' opposition to negotiations. Sihanouk reportedly said that Lon Nol was leaving "under pressure from the US" and that the move was a "trap" into which neither he nor the communists would fall. The Prince predicted a "100-percent" victory for the insurgents.

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USSR-PORTUGAL

*Moscow, which is trying to strengthen its ties with Portuguese leaders, gave front-page coverage to Portuguese Labor Minister Costa Martins when he visited the USSR last week.*

Costa Martins, who is a member of the ruling Armed Forces Movement, met for three hours with Soviet Premier Kosygin. The Premier, speaking "on behalf of the Soviet leadership," expressed solidarity with the Portuguese government and the Armed Forces Movement. Costa Martins subsequently told the press that Kosygin had promised Soviet aid to Portugal. Moscow heretofore has been notably reluctant to give the Portuguese, including Communist leader Cunhal, reason to believe that substantial economic aid is a possibility.

Moscow's public coverage of the abortive coup of March 11 and its aftermath suggests that its qualms about Portugal are ebbing. Against this are reports circulating in Lisbon and elsewhere that the Soviets are still fearful that the Portuguese political situation may get out of hand and that the Soviets are doing what they can to counsel moderation. These reports help Moscow deal with expressions of concern it has received from the West Germans, the Italians, and others regarding the direction of political events in Portugal.



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## IRAN-IRAQ

*The communiqué that concluded the visit of Iranian Prime Minister Hoveyda to Iraq last week pledged both sides to work for closer cooperation in all areas and affirmed that the Persian Gulf region should be "spared all foreign interference." The Shah has frequently indicated his desire to arrange closer security cooperation among Gulf countries. Until now, he had excluded Baghdad from those with whom he has sought to cooperate.*

The Shah has supported US naval activity in the Persian Gulf as a counter to Soviet naval access to Iraqi facilities. He regards Soviet influence in Iraq as a threat to Iranian and Gulf security, and the reduction of that influence has been a major foreign policy goal. To the extent that the Shah now presses Iraq to reduce its ties to the Soviet Union, he in turn will be under pressure from his Arab critics to indicate that Iran is not closely tied to US policy in the region.

Iran and Iraq, meanwhile, have completed joint preparations to seal their border at the expiration today of the cease-fire between Iraq and the Kurdish rebels that was announced on March 13. Beginning today, Iraqi Kurds--both civilians and fighting men--will no longer be allowed to take refuge in Iran. The Iraqi army is expected to resume its offensive against pockets of remaining rebels.

Baghdad has, however, extended until the end of April the amnesty it has offered to Kurdish refugees in Iran who return to Iraq. Few refugees are expected to return.

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NOTES

*Suleyman Demirel took the reins of government in Turkey yesterday.*

The Justice Party leader now has a maximum of one week to prepare a government program for a parliamentary vote of confidence. The shaky foundation of the new government may have already been weakened; four independents are reported to have withdrawn their support. No sharp turns are likely in major Turkish policies, but there will be pressure on Demirel to harden the policy toward Cyprus.

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*Turkish and Greek Cypriot forces in Nicosia exchanged fire last night before UN forces succeeded in restoring the cease-fire.*

Turkish troops may have been reacting to shots fired by Greek Cypriots who reportedly were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the guerrilla campaign against the British. The Turks, who claim to have information that the Greek Cypriots will soon initiate a guerrilla campaign against the Turkish sector, may be attempting to react strongly to any provocation to dissuade the Greek Cypriots from such a venture.

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## A LOOK AT THE KHMER COMMUNISTS

*With the Cambodian conflict now approaching what may be its final stages, the insurgent leaders and their administrative apparatus stand ready to take the reins of power in Phnom Penh. The handful of leading insurgent figures known in the West probably will assume prominent positions in a successor regime, but actual power in post-war Cambodia will be held by the covert Khmer Communist Party.*

The overt political and military organizations of the Cambodian insurgency are the National United Front of Cambodia and the Cambodian People's National Liberation Armed Forces, both of which were created five years ago. Sihanouk's Royal Government of National Union so far has had no significant role inside Cambodia, but has been used as a channel for the insurgents' external relations.

Actually controlling and directing the insurgent apparatus is the Khmer Communist Party. It assumed formal identity in 1961, but it traces its origins to the early 1950s and Ho Chi Minh's Indochina Communist Party. The Khmer party has expanded to a membership of over 10,000, led by a central committee of about 20 members.

The composition of the central committee has remained a closely guarded secret. Sihanouk's "defense minister" and "deputy prime minister" Khieu Samphan is the best known of the senior leaders, but it is generally believed that Saloth Sar is top man in the party. Ieng Sary--who now handles most direct contacts with Peking and Hanoi--also appears to occupy a position of strength. Other central committee members have been identified with varying degrees of certainty. These include such well-known individuals as Hou Yuon and Hu Nim and a variety of civilian leaders, insurgent military commanders, and regional party chairmen.

All of the individuals whose membership in the central committee is fairly well established are in their 40s. Most qualify as Cambodian intellectuals, having been educated during the 1950s in France--where they absorbed their leftist if not their communist ideology--and having subsequently worked as

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journalists or teachers. Khieu Samphan and Hou Yuon, in fact, have doctorates in economics. A significant number have had considerable experience in politics: Khieu Samphan and at least two others held cabinet portfolios under Sihanouk during the 1960s. Almost all the known or suspected party leaders are remembered as tough nationalists and unyielding ideologues even before their involvement in the insurgency. Another collective trait is long-standing opposition, and in many cases personal enmity, toward Prince Sihanouk.

The party has directed the insurgency with cohesiveness and determination. Evidence of internal friction has appeared, however, particularly on the matter of the party's relationship with the Vietnamese communists.

Relationship with Hanoi and Peking

Hanoi nurtured the Cambodian party while Sihanouk was in power, and ties became even closer during the initial years of the current conflict when the Vietnamese increased their support. From the beginning, however, Hanoi has had to deal with an undercurrent of Khmer distrust; Khmer suspicions and contentiousness grew as the Khmer Communist Party expanded and assumed responsibility for its own military and political affairs.

The lines of division on the issue are murky, but Ieng Sary--who, along with several other top leaders, is supposed to have received training in North Vietnam--is frequently identified as the leading proponent of close ties with Hanoi. Khieu Samphan is often reported as heading a more nationalistic faction, which has apparently had some success in its efforts to strengthen the party's ties with Peking as a balance to Hanoi's influence.

China, for its part, has appeared eager to cultivate ties with the insurgents. It apparently has the dual intention of preventing Vietnamese dominance over the Cambodians and foreclosing any possible intrusion of Soviet influence.

The party's already discernible drift toward some middle ground between Peking and Hanoi may involve practical considerations. North Vietnam's ability to extend post-war reconstruction aid to a communist-controlled Cambodia would be limited, while China would be in a position to provide help to rebuild the country's war-torn economy. The

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party, in fact, seems keenly aware of the major problems it would encounter in the period immediately following an end to the fighting and has been careful to keep open all potential sources of foreign aid. A policy statement issued by a recent "congress" of party front organizations, for example, juxtaposed a promise of an "independent and nonaligned foreign policy" with a statement that it would accept all "unconditional aid."

Attitude Toward Sihanouk

The leadership's current policy toward Sihanouk also appears to have been developed with an eye to the future. It now seems fairly certain that the party plans to retain Sihanouk as a nominal leader if and when the insurgents win a total military victory or the Lon Nol government capitulates. Party leaders have long recognized that the Prince has given their movement a legitimacy both inside and outside Cambodia that otherwise it would not have had. During a period of post-war consolidation, Sihanouk's value as a domestic rallying point and his ability to attract international recognition and economic support will be important. The Prince's close relationship with Chinese leaders is probably also a consideration. The party may, in fact, have been under some pressure from Peking to retain Sihanouk.

Sihanouk, for his part, appears painfully aware of the party's exploitative attitude toward him. His recent claims that he will involve himself after the war only in foreign relations may reflect arrangements he has been forced to accept. Similarly, Sihanouk's frequent references to the possibility of early retirement probably reflect an awareness that his usefulness will decline and pressures to jettison him will increase as the party gains confidence in its administrative ability and as the country's international position becomes established.

Post-War Domestic Policy

The party's professed aim is to impose its own brand of Marxism on Cambodian society. Essentially

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this will mean the implementation on a country-wide basis of programs long under way in the communist zone. These include:

- Destruction of the traditional administrative system and its replacement by a centralized government controlled by the party.

- Confiscation of privately owned land and the establishment of government-run communes.

- Nationalization of all industry and commerce.

- Gradual replacement of Buddhism by communist-controlled mass organizations.

Although the Khmer Communist Party leadership lacks the pool of well-trained cadre possessed by its Asian allies, it can be expected to push relentlessly its efforts to regiment and collectivize Khmer society, using force where necessary.

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